and difficult areas to undertake restoration of degarded eco systems through afforestation, soil conservaton and water resource management techniques. At present there are four Eco-Task Force Battalions raised with the Regular and Territorial Army Personnel, located in the Shivalik Hills (Dehradun), Jaisalmer (Rajasthan), Jammu & Kashmir and Pithoragarh (Uttaranchal).

The substantive Scheme is administered by the Ministry of Defence and reimbursement of the expenditure is made by the Ministry of Environment & Forests.

Environmental clearance to projects

2640. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether overhaul of environment clearance regulations has been done and has been now submitted to PM for final approval;

(b) if so, by what time these new rules are likely to be announced;

(c) to what extent the new rules will help in immediate clearance of projects by both the Center and States; and

(d) whether at present it take longer time in according environmental clearance to the projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Under the existing Environment Impact Assessment notification, 1994, 120 days is the prescribed period for granting environmental clearance from date of receipt of application with requisite documents and informaton.

Polavaram Project

2641. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware that due to Polavaram Project's proposed design, 300 villages in 9 mandals in these districts in Andhra Pradesh would be submerged displacing more than two lakh tribal people and their livelihood; and

(b) if so, how the Central Government accorded environmental clearance (EIA) to the project and allowed the Andhra Pradesh State Government to go ahead with the project work without other clearances?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The Government is aware that a total of 276 villages (including hamlets) in 9 mandals in three districts of Andhra Pradesh would be submerged displacing 1,75,275 people out of which 60,770 people are Schedule Tribes.

(b) The project has been accorded environmental clearance as per the procedure prescribed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification 1994, and its subsequent amendments notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Social Forestry Programme

2642. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the implementation of Social Forestry Programme in various States;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last one and half year, particularly in the State of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) whether the above programme has failed to yield any results in last one year;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken to identify the bottlenecks and to plug the loopholes?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Ministry of Environment and Forests has not carried out any review of the social forestry schemes in the country in the recent past. On its part, the Ministry is implementing National Afforestation Programme (NAP) Scheme in all States of the country. The Scheme is being implementing